

(Washington DC) Yesterday, Senator Frist and Speaker Hastert reversed their position on prosecuting undocumented workers and their families as felons. The original draft of the House passed immigration bill contained a provision that would have criminalized undocumented workers and their families. Being in the United States without a valid visa would become a felony. During floor consideration of the bill, Rep. James Sensenbrenner, the bill's sponsor and primary proponent, tried to downgrade the severity of this provision but did not succeed in amending the bill.

Congressman Charlie Gonzalez issued the following statement:

"It should come as no surprise that the sponsors and supporters of the unjust and impractical House immigration bill passed in December would continue to display poor judgment and lack of logic in trying to blame Democrats for their legislative fiasco. I suggest Republican leadership plead guilty to the misdemeanor of political pandering before the American people find them guilty of the felony of incompetence.

Of course, now that this issue has splintered their party and blown up in their faces, they're trying to blame Democrats. We were not allowed a substantive role in drafting the bill, so how can we be responsible for what they wrote and passed? It is incumbent upon them, not us, to explain why they proposed this in the first place.

This reminds me of the defendant who was on trial for murdering his parents and begged the jury for mercy because he was an orphan. The dishonesty and deceit of the Republicans on this issue is breathtaking."